

REMARKS

In the Office action, claims 1-5 are rejected as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,204,270 (D'Orsay).

Claims 1 and 4 have been amended by incorporating the features of claim 2, which has been canceled. Claims 1 and 3-5 are pending. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

The D'Orsay patent discloses a technique for adjusting the orientation of a vehicle headlamp. The Background section of that patent explains that it is desirable, during movement of the vehicle, to maintain a constant distance L between the vehicle and the point on the road where the headlamp beam impinges (col. 1, lines 14-18). Variations in the load occur during acceleration and deceleration (col. 1, lines 24-25).

The system disclosed by the D'Orsay patent includes sensors C1, C2 that indicate the distance from the vehicle to the road. A calculator 5 receives voltages from the sensors and generates a voltage which is a function of α_0 (defined in the equation at col. 4, lines 45-50). A control means 11 (e.g., a motor) drives the headlamp. As explained at col. 4, line 66 – col. 5, line 2, that technique allows the distance L to be maintained despite changes in the load and height of the vehicle that occur as a result of acceleration/deceleration.

Despite some apparent similarity to the claimed subject matter, the D'Orsay patent does not disclose, or suggest, the particular features that have been incorporated into claims 1 and 4 from claim 2. In particular, the D'Orsay patent does not disclose or suggest an irradiation control means that “subtracts an angle obtained as an inverse tangent of a ratio ‘Hh1/L’ from the ground reference . . .”

The Office action points to col. 4, lines 38-65 as allegedly disclosing those features. That is incorrect. Although the D'Orsay patent refers to a subtractor (or comparator) 9, it is clear from the description at the referenced section of the D'Orsay patent and from FIG. 2 that whatever subtraction or comparison that occurs is different from the claimed subject matter. The values entered into the subtractor/comparator 9 are voltages. The voltage obtained from the

calculator corresponds to a parameter α_0 (defined at col. 4, lines 46-50), whereas the voltage from the feedback 8 corresponds to “ α ” which is the angular position of the headlights in relation to the vehicle body (col. 4, lines 18-20).

Even if the angle α_0 in the D'Orsay patent were considered to correspond to the “ground reference angle” recited in the pending claims, the angle α in the D'Orsay patent is not “obtained an inverse tangent of a ratio ‘Hhl/L,’” where “Hhl” is the ground clearance of the vehicle lamp and “L” is the forward visible distance of the vehicle, as recited in the pending claims.

At least for those reasons, independent claims 1 and 4, as well as dependent claims 3 and 5, should be allowable.

Nor would the claimed subject matter have been obvious from the D'Orsay patent. Whereas the technique of the D'Orsay patent requires use of two sensors C1 and C2, the present invention can use a single sensor.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections of the pending claims.

Acknowledgment of priority

The acknowledgement of priority at page 1 of the Office action (par. 12) is partially inaccurate. The pending application claims priority from a Japanese application. A certified copy of the priority application was filed with the USPTO in connection with this application.

This application, however, is not based on a PCT application and is not a national phase application.

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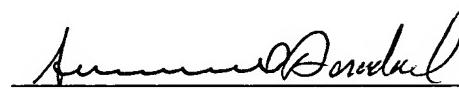
Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests allowance of all pending claims and proper acknowledgement of applicant's claim of priority.

Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 9/13/05



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